

Agricultural.

The Husking Party.

The good old fashioned huskings, when the young people, and all those young fellows of a neighborhood gathered around the heaps of corn in the barn house, husked the golden ears with merry talk and laughter, and afterwards partook of a generous and jolly, if indigestible supper, in the farm house, have almost become a thing of the past.

It, however, we look on the husking party as a cheap means of getting the work done, we shall deservingly be often disappointed. Especially will this be the case if the effort is made to bring in a certain class of village people and others, who have no connection of the value of farm produce to the farmer and whose manners are frequently marked by boisterous coarseness.

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Hand-in-hand these husbandries have done more for agriculture than aught else since the world was civilized. It is the immense quantity of turnips, mangel wurzel, and swedes eaten by sheep on the land, that chiefly keeps up the fertility of the arable soil, and causes the yield of wheat, barley, oats, and peas to increase to double the number of bushels which were formerly grown.

It is a characteristic of the American nation, and the men who shall invent a morable sheep pen, affording shelter so that sheep can be kept daily moved all over the field, as the crop is eaten, will be a benefactor to this country, have his name handed down to posterity, and as a still sharper spur to ingenuity, gather in the shekels abundantly for, although the manure is good when made under cover, yet there is loss of urine, loss of time in hauling the turp crop, and again in carting the manure.

When this is made practicable, the swedes can be put into heaps of a load or two, on the field, just as in England, and covered with earth sufficiently thick to keep out the frost. Then, with a crowbar or like implement, it will be easy to break into the heap, cut them up with a machine, and feed exactly as is always done in England, in the open field.

The South will, doubtless, eventually be the great sheep producing land, and three turpins can be grown and consumed by the sheep; but, by improving the grass land and contriving to have food pastures opened to them in Winter, and encouraging the best varieties of grass for a permanency, very little roots of any kind would be necessary, as any quantity of mutton and wool may be produced from stimulation by corn, peas, or grain. Nevertheless, a heavy crop of swedes given to a flock of sheep intended for the butcher, will bring them out in the Spring riper by a good deal, and not only will there be better and more mutton, but the wool will be correspondingly improved.

It was a little hard on the boy, for he meant well and had a sincere admiration for the girl. They were sitting at the tea table with a company of others, and as he passed her the sugar, he murmured in an undertone: "Here it is, sweet, just like you." The compliment was a little awkward, to be sure, but he meant it, and it seemed more cruel when, in a moment later, she had occasion to pass the butter to him, she drew, "Here it is, soft, just like you."

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Young Foks.

A Budget of Home-Made Christmas Gifts.

Who is it that every year invents the thousand-and-one new and pretty things which hang on Christmas-trees, and stuff the toes of Christmas stockings? Who is it that has so wise and watchful an eye for the capacities of little people, and the tastes of bigger ones, providing for each, planning for thy presses with a vision nothing in those, as well as for fat wallets stuffed with bank-bills, and suggesting something which can be made, accepted and enjoyed by everybody, large and small, all the wide world over? Who can it be that possesses this inexhaustible fertility of invention and kindness of heart? No ordinary human being you may be sure. Not Father Santa Claus! He has enough to do with distributing the presents after they are made; besides, fairy work is not in a man's line—not even a saint's! It is not so likely as that he should have a mate, and that it is to her we are indebted for all this? What an immense work basket Mother Santa Claus must be! What a glancing thimble and swift needle and thread! Can't you imagine her throwing aside her scissors and spool-bag to help the dear saint "tackle up" and load the sleds? And who knows but she sits behind as he drives over the roofs of the universe on the blessed eve, and holds the reins while Santa Claus dispenses to favored children the innumerable pretty things which he and she have checked over together months and months before the rest of us knew anything about them?

This is not a fact. It can't be proved in any way, for none of us knows anything about the Santa Clauses or their abode. There is no telegraphing, or writing to the select men of their town to inquire about them; they haven't a post-office address. But admitting it to be a fiction, it is surely a pleasant one, so, as the children say, "Let's play that it is true," and proceed to do what Mother Santa Claus has in her basket for us this year. We will first pull out our easy things for the benefit of little beings who are not yet up to all the tricks of the needle; then some a little harder for more advanced classes; and, at bottom of all, big girls not afraid to divide will find plenty of elaborate designs suited to their taste and powers.

A WALL LETTER HOLDER. This is something which quite a little boy could make. Cut out three pieces of this wood, a foot long by six inches wide; smooth and sand-paper two of them; bore a hole in each corner and in the middle of one side, and fasten them together with fine wire, cord, ribbon, or the small brass pins which are used for holding manuscripts. The pieces should be held a little apart. Cut one end of the third piece into some ornamental shape, give it firmly to the back of one of the others, and suspend it from the wall by a hole bored in the top. It will be found a useful thing to hold letters or notices. A clear boy could make this much handsomer by cutting a pattern over the front; or an initial, or monogram, or name in the middle. The wood should be oiled or shellacked.

SHOE-CASES. These cases are meant to take the place of paper when shoes are to be wrapped up to go in a trunk. They are made of brown crash, bound with red worsted braid. One end is pointed so as to turn over and button down, or the top has strings over and button to the mouth up. There should be three or four made at a time, as each holds but one pair of shoes; and you will find that your mamma or your unmarried aunts will like them very much.

A NEW KIND OF CHRISTMAS PIE. Nothing can be droller than to hang up one's stockings, and nothing prettier or more full of meaning than a Christmas-tree. But for some of you who may like to make a novelty in these time-honored ways, we will just mention that it is good fun to make a "Christmas-pie" in an enormous tin dishpan, with a make-believe crust of yellow cartridge paper, ornamented with twigs and flourishes of the same, held down with pins and ivory-headed and sugar plums, jakes and jolly little rhymes fastened to the parcels. The cutting should be done beforehand, and hidden by the twigs of paper; but the carver can pretend to use his knife and fork, and spooning out the packages will insure a merry time for all at table. And one more suggestion. Little articles wrapped in white paper, can be put inside cakes, baked and iced, and thus furnish another amusing surprise for the "pie" or the Christmas-tree—St. Nicholas for November.

MOTHER'S WHITE CAKE.—One cup sugar and one-half cup butter mixed well together; whites of three eggs beaten to a froth; one teaspoon soda in one-half cup of milk; two teaspoons of cream of tartar in a cup of flour; one half cup of corn-starch, lemon.

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